

**Riverside County Children and Families Commission**  
***Regular Joint Meeting of the***  
***Commission and Advisory Committee***  
**Wednesday, December 14, 2011 1:30 p.m.**  
**Riverside County Children and Families Commission**  
**2002 Iowa Avenue, Suite 100**  
**Riverside, California 92507**

**A. Call To Order:**

The Regular Joint Meeting of the Commission and Advisory Committee was called to order at 1:30 p.m. by Commission Chair, Susan Loew.

Commissioners Present: Susan Loew; Sharon Baskett; Judee Cox (arrived at 1:34 pm); Jay Hoffman; Steven Morford; Supervisor Buster; Debbie Whitaker-Meneses; and Lupe Watson (arrived at 1:50 p.m.).

Commissioners Absent: None

Commission Vacancy: One

Alternates Present: Connie Beasley; Georgann Koenig; and Touraj Shafai (arrived at 2:44 p.m.).

Alternates Absent: Debbie Franklin; Sylvia Deporto Stan Grube

Advisory Vacancy: One

Staff Present: Harry Freedman, Executive Director; Stella Smith, Deputy Director; Lynn Stephens, Executive Assistant/Commission Secretary; Arrin Banks, Administrator, Grants and Contracts; Laurie Schoenberg, Administrator, Early Care & Education; Johnathan McDannell, Administrator, Outcomes Management; Veronica Hilton, Interim Administrator, Health & Community Programs; Uniqua Burgess, Program Specialist, Health & Community Programs Carol Abella, Program Specialist, Early Care & Education; Jean Alexander-Booth, Program Specialist, Early Care & Education; Sonia Jizrawi, Program Specialist, Early Care & Education; Sherry Watkins, Facilities & Operations Specialist; Cindy Brandon, Administrative Secretary II; and Jaime Ayala, Public Information Coordinator

Patricia Munroe was in attendance as legal counsel for the Commission (arrived at 1:34 p.m.).

**B. Open Session**

1. Pledge of Allegiance

**C. Commission and Advisory Committee Business – Susan Loew, Commission Chair**

1. Commission Member Comments: Commission Chair Loew reported Alternate Kristi Franklin had to resign as an Alternate and Advisory Committee member. Supervisor Benoit's office will look into filling her position.
2. Advisory Committee Member Comments and Approval of the Minutes of the November 9, 2011 Special Advisory Committee Meeting: There were no comments. No approval of minutes due to a lack of a quorum.
3. Executive Director Comments – Harry Freedman, Executive Director: Ounce of Prevention video shown.
4. Approval of the Minutes of the November 9, 2011, Regular Joint Commission Meeting with the Advisory Committee

Commissioner Vice-Chair Hoffman moved to approve the Minutes of the November 9, 2011 Regular Joint Meeting of the Commission and Advisory Committee. Commissioner Morford seconded the motion. *Commission Chair Loew called for a vote. The motion carried. [Following is the vote of the Commission members present: Seven (7) in favor [Loew, Baskett, Supervisor Buster, Cox, Morford, Watson, Whitaker-Meneses,] One (1) Absent, (Watson), Zero (0), Abstain, One (1) Vacant].*

#### D. Reports

1. Action Report – (Action) – Stella Smith, Deputy Director  
Ms. Smith reviewed action items 11-34 through 11-37 as presented in the Commission packet.

**11-34:** Approving the Amendment to the Contract Between the Riverside County Children and Families Commission and Nuview Union School District for State School Readiness – **Contract #7018 SR 09**

**Recommended Action:** That the Commission 1) approve the amendment to the Investment of Funds Contract between the Commission and Nuview Union School District (**contingent on State Commission Approval of the School Readiness budget amendment request**); 2) authorize the Executive Director to make any necessary adjustments to the amendment, not to exceed the recommended rollover amount of \$314,967 (based on State Commission full or partial approval); and 3) authorized the Executive Director or designee to execute the necessary documents/actions to effectuate this action without further action by the Commission.

(Conflict was noted for Commission Vice-Chair Hoffman who excused himself from discussion at 1:40 p.m.)

*Commissioner Morford moved to approve action item 11-34 as presented. Supervisor Buster seconded the motion. Commission Chair Loew called for a vote. The motion carried. [Following is the vote of the Commission members present: Six (6) in favor [Loew, Baskett, Supervisor Buster, Cox, Morford, Whitaker-Meneses) One (1) Absent, (Watson), One (1) Conflict (Hoffman), Zero (0) Abstain, One (1) Vacant]. (Commission Vice Chair Hoffman returned to the meeting at 1:41 p.m.)*

**11-35:** Approving the Amendment to the Contract Between the Riverside County Children and Families Commission and Murrieta Valley Unified School District – **Contract #7101 EC-11**

**Recommended Action:** That the Commission 1) approve the amendment to the Investment of Funds Contract between the Commission and Murrieta Valley Unified School District as attached; 2) authorize the Executive Director or designee to execute the agreement and any actions and required to effectuate this action without requiring further action by the Commission.

**11-36:** Approving the Amendment to the Contract Between the Riverside County Children and Families Commission and Temecula Valley Unified School District – **Contract #7104 EC-11**

**Recommended Action:** That the Commission 1) approve the amendment to the Investment of Funds Contract between the Commission and Temecula Valley Unified School District as attached; and 2) authorize the Executive Director or designee to execute the agreement and any actions required to effectuate this action without requiring further action by the Commission.

**11-37:** Approving the Amendment to the Contract Between the Riverside County Children and Families Commission and Loma Linda University, Department of Ophthalmology – School of Pediatric Ophthalmology – **Contract 3400 HS-11**

**Recommended Action:** Request that the Commission 1) approve the rollover funds not to exceed \$151,275 to Loma Linda University, Department of Ophthalmology-School of Pediatric Ophthalmology for the period covering July 1, 2011-June 30,2012 (12 months) to continue the implementation of a countywide vision screening and intervention program; 2) Authorize the Executive Director or designee to move forward with the amendment of the Investment of Funds Contract as stipulated above; and 3) Authorize the Executive Director or designee to finalize and execute the amendment of the contract subject to legal review, and take action relating to management of this contract without requiring further action of the Commission.

*Commissioner Chair Loew moved to approve action items 11-35, 36 and 37 in a block as presented. Commissioner Cox seconded the motion. Commission Chair Loew called for a vote. The motion carried. [Following is the vote of the Commission members present: Seven (7) in favor [Loew, Baskett, Supervisor Buster, Cox, Hoffman, Morford, Whitaker-Meneses) One (1) Absent (Watson), Zero (0) Abstain, One (1) Vacant].*

## **E. Presentations**

### **1. Mental Health Initiative**

Family Service Association of Western Riverside County – Candy Curiel, MA, MFTI, Project Director and Riverside County Department of Mental Health Chris Home, LCSW, Mental Health – Services Supervisor

(Commissioner Watson arrived at 1:50 p.m.)

Parent, Susie Okada, spoke on her experience with the program and how successful it has been for her and her child. Commission Chair Loew requested information from FSA that shows the distribution of services across the county. Ms. Curiel agreed they can provide this information and would submit to the F5R Program Specialist, Uniqua Burgess.

Riverside County Department of Mental Health, Anna Loza presented on behalf of Chris Home. She shared the presentation as provided in the Commission packet including highlighting the Lake Elsinore SNAP program's success with screenings needed.

### **2. CARES Plus Program – Dr. Margaret N. Wild, Ph.D. shared her presentation as provided in the Commission packet. Commissioner Whitaker-Meneses noted that it has been brought to her attention that the CARES Plus process is challenging to teachers and students due to the State requirements**

## **F. Discussion/Action**

### **1. Strategic Plan Implementation – Harry Freedman, Executive Director presented.**

(See Commission packet distributed pursuant to this December 14, 2011 Commission meeting, a copy of which may be viewed at the Commission business office at the address listed at the end of this agenda.)

#### **a. Health RFP Status:**

Ms. Smith reported that all six RFPs were posted December 8, 2011. Four were amended, and two more amendments will be posted after today's meeting. There was a pre-bid conference held at DPSS in Riverside on December 12, 2011 and there will be another one held on December 15, 2011 at the Regional Access Project office in Palm Desert. Ms. Smith provided an overview of the timeline as provided in the Commission packet.

#### **b. ECE RFP Status:**

Mr. Freedman recapped prior discussions and actions from previous meetings. He noted that a link was provided regarding this item on the Commission website. (Alternate Shafai arrived at 2:44 p.m.) Ms. Schoenberg provided an overview of related F5R staff activities and provided an update on the status. She noted the staff had previously worked through many of the same concerns expressed by the community.

**Key Adjustments and Guidelines:** After a brief discussion it was Commission consensus to have less focus on one application per agency and allow one application per agency site. Agencies can submit multiple applications based upon the requirement not to exceed 25% of the capacity for children 0-5 without a 24 or other scholarship cap. The review committee will review and provide input regarding the population of need.

**Program Requirements & Implementation Items:** Funding will be for spaces in the classroom, a scholarship may not move with a child to another classroom. If there is an opening for a F5R scholarship, the scholarship could go with the child. The same tier criteria rate is being used for child care and center based programs. (Supervisor Buster returned at 3:25 p.m.) F5R will fund 20-30 agencies (one application per site).

**Staff Responses for Requested Clarification and Proposed First 5 Scholarship Rates and Adjustment Factors** were reviewed. F5R will provide additional funds to help increase quality to meet improvement plans on a one time basis. Environmental Rating Scales will be completed by external raters and are only for those agencies possibly being recommended to the Commission for funding. The tiered reimbursements will be linked to the outcome of the external ratings and will not be established until the readers have scored the RFP's and selected applications for possible funding. Ms. Schoenberg reported the RFQ for the External Raters for the Environmental Rating Scale was posted on the F5R website December 13th.

**Scholarships for staff/teacher's children:** A discussion ensued on the pros and cons of allowing staff of centers to receive scholarship funds. Discussion included definition of "providers" and owners versus staff.

Agencies will not be allowed to charge parents additional fees.

**Public Comments:**

1. Gayle Clark, Bermuda Dunes Learning Center provided handouts to the Commission from a report provided to the F5 Association. She commented that she disagreed with not allowing child care providers to apply for scholarships for their own children. She expressed her concern with special needs children noting middle income families may not qualify for scholarships. She asked for the RFP to not be restricted to scholarships strictly based on financial need, or children with an IEP. She asked that the funding be spread out evenly throughout the county.
2. Malinda Margiotta, ABC handed out her notes of questions and concerns related to Ms. Schoenberg's information presented today. Ms. Margiotta questioned if registration fees and overtime fees for over 10 hours of child care could be charged to the parents. She recommended the original language of each agency submitting one application for scholarships regardless of number of licenses be used in order to allow an agency to move a child to another location if needed.

After Commission discussion, Commission Chair Loew asked staff to come back to address concerns raised. 1) Is it possible to evaluate the quality of an agency by site overall rather than by classroom; why is the program designed on a classroom basis; what would be the

opportunities that could be created by changing to an overall site evaluation? 2) To what extent can we create flexibility about how slots are funded that takes into consideration the movement of children as their development and readiness dictates and will this change how you define how the slot is funded; is it tied to the child or the classroom? 3) Can we be more flexible; is there a way to fund slots more generically that allows funding for special needs and allows agencies the flexibility to best serve the needs of children in their care? 4) Revisit family members and staff members being allowed to participate in applying for scholarships and revisit the definition of provider, for instance is the provider the director, owner or staff? (Does CDE have rules that prohibit providers to apply for scholarships?) 5) Alternate Beasley suggested the money follow the child in order to follow the needs.

Ms. Schoenberg clarified the new higher tiered reimbursement rates will fund approximately 40-50 less children in total. Zip code assessments have previously been based on past research of high need areas through the Advancement Project. Staff will clarify if we are looking at the zip codes based on the provider or child's residence for this RFP. Staff will address if there will be additional fees charged to parents for late pick up, registration or other fees besides tuition. Commissioner Watson noted her concern with the inclusion programs and hopes the Commission considers assisting programs in areas we know need assistance by taking a portion of funds and dedicate to them and not just dedicate to scholarship Second Phase Funding: Commission Chair Loew questioned if the funds that are currently allocated for the second phase of funding for quality improvement are going to be adequate to meet the needs of quality improvement identified. Will F5R hold agencies to the expectation to make quality improvements if F5R doesn't have the funding to assist them with making the improvements? She asked staff to consider and address this question when we get to that stage

2. Update on the Probationary Status and Corrective Active Plan for The Wylie Center – **Contract #1240 OP-12 and 1435 OP-12** – Harry Freedman, Executive Director  
Mr. Freedman noted staff will come back in January with a recommendation. Information was requested to be received from them by December 16.

**G. Information Items** (Copies of complete reports are on file at the Commission's business office.)  
There were no comments on information items.

1. October Financial Statement – Stella Smith, Deputy Director
2. Executive Director Report – Harry Freedman, Executive Director
3. AB99 Bill Update – Harry Freedman, Executive Director
4. Quarterly Evaluation Report – Johnathan McDannell, Administrator, Outcomes Management
5. Public Relations Update – Jamie Ayala, Public Information Coordinator

**H. Funded Agency Public Comments:** None

**I. Public Comments:**

1. Jane Carney: Encouraged the Commission to move the ECE Families in Crisis RFP forward as soon as possible as this is an area of urgent need.
2. Joan Thirlettle, President, Path of Life Ministries and Damien O'Farrell Vice President of Path of Life Ministries provided a handout on the need for funding Homeless Early Childhood Education and Care. (Commissioner Hoffman left the meeting at 4:36 p.m., and returned at 4:38 p.m.,) Mr. O'Farrell gave an overview on national statistics for those in crisis and validation of the need for the ECE RFP to be released.
3. Woodie Rucker-Hughes, of RUSD Homeless Education reported on the importance of funding for homeless families.

Supervisor Buster suggested to moving public comments to the beginning of the meetings. It was the consensus of the Commission to make this change in the order of future Commission Agendas.

**J. Closed Session** – 4:43 p.m. - 6:00 p.m. Conference with Legal Counsel.

The Commission addressed two items:

- 1) Status of AB 99 – Report Out: Nothing to report.
- 2) Addressing allegations by former employee, P. Luna, of misuse of taxpayer funds, preferential awarding of contracts, and deception of commissioners.

Report Out: There was a subcommittee formed consisting of Commissioners Cox, Whitaker-Meneses, and Loew. An extensive review of the execution of contracts was conducted. There was nothing illegal or unethical found. However, the subcommittee identified some operational and organizational issues. The Commission has directed that an executive closed session be conducted in the new year for the purpose of personnel evaluation.

**K. Adjournment** – Meeting adjourned at 6:00 p.m. (Open Session ended at 4:43 and Closed Session ended at 5:55 p.m.)